



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/633,535	08/05/2003	Yoshihiro Tsukidate	100353-00173	6456
4372	7590	08/01/2005	EXAMINER	
ARENT FOX PLLC 1050 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W. SUITE 400 WASHINGTON, DC 20036			LE, THONG QUOC	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2827	

DATE MAILED: 08/01/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/633,535

Applicant(s)

TSUKIDATE, YOSHIHIRO

Examiner

Thong Q. Le

Art Unit

2827

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3-10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Amendment filed on 06/06/2005 has been entered.
2. Claims 1-10 are presented for examination.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-10 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Choi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,108,259).

Regarding claim 1, Choi et al. disclose a nonvolatile semiconductor memory device (Figure 1), comprising:

a plurality of blocks (100) each having a memory cell array (ABSTRACT);

a reference cell (Figure 2, 250);

a signal line that supplies a reference signal read from said reference cell to each of said plurality of blocks (Column 3, lines 54-67, Column 4, lines 1-5);

a plurality of reference load circuits (Figure 2, 520) , each of which is provided in each of said plurality of blocks, and imposes a load on the reference signal that is

identical to a load imposed on data that is read from said memory cell array (Column 4, lines 14-41); and

a plurality of sensing circuits (Figure 1, 300, ABSTRACT) , each of which is provided in each of said plurality of blocks (Figure 2, 100, 500), and compares the data with the reference signal having the load imposed thereon by said reference load circuit so as to sense the data (Column 1, lines 36-40, lines 45-59, Column 4, lines 35-41).

Regarding claim 2, Choi et al. disclose wherein said reference load circuit includes a pass gate that allows the reference signal to go therethrough only in one of the blocks that is selected (Column 1, lines 41-59).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 3-10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 3-10 include allowable subject matter since the prior art made of record and considered pertinent to the applicant's disclosure does not teach or suggest the claimed limitations. Choi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,108,259), and others, does not teach the claimed invention having a Y gate which is provided in each of said plurality of blocks, and selects the data read from said memory cell array, wherein a gate at a last stage of said Y gate and said pass gate are structurally identical as circuit elements, and are driven by the same potential.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thong Q. Le whose telephone number is 571-272-1783. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00am-5:00pm M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hoai V. Ho can be reached on 571-272-1777. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Thong Q. Le
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2827

THONG LE
PRIMARY EXAMINER